

Am I eligible for the Student Internship Program?

To be eligible, a prospective intern must be currently registered, enrolled, or accepted for enrollment in a program of study, at least half-time. All federal interns must be taking classes leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate at an accredited high school, technical or vocational school, college, university, graduate, or professional school. Home-schooled students may participate provided they are studying in an accredited home-school or a home-school curriculum approved by their state.

The definition of part-time will vary from one institution to another. If there is any doubt about the adequacy of a student's course load (for example, fewer than 8 units or credits per semester), the institution's definition will be accepted. An exception to the course load requirements may be made when the student is nearing graduation and needs only a few courses or a few units to fulfill requirements.

Students do not have to be enrolled during the summer but proof of enrollment for the upcoming semester is necessary (for example, a letter from the admission office).

Is there an age requirement to participate in the Student Internship Program?

Yes, all federally employed interns must be 16 years of age or older.

What are excepted service positions?

Federal interns are hired in excepted service positions. An excepted service appointment is defined as a federal position that is not in the competitive service or the Senior Executive Service. An excepted position is a federal position that may be filled without regard to the Office of Personnel Management competitive examining procedures.

Do I have to be a US citizen to participate in the Student Internship program?

Since student positions are considered excepted service, U.S. citizenship is not required. However, only non-citizens from treaty-allied countries and certain other countries may be employed with proper authorization to work in the United States. Only US citizens may be converted to a career, career-conditional, or term appointment. In some cases, students may be hired and converted to career, career-conditional, or term employment. For this reason, non-citizens should not be appointed to a position unless it is reasonably certain that they will attain U.S. citizenship by the time they graduate (e.g., has already completed residency requirements and has filed an application for citizenship). Citizens from countries on the Department of State's list of state sponsors of terrorism are prohibited from **working in a USDA facility as a contractor or volunteer or visiting USDA facilities**. This does not apply to interns who are from these countries but are permanent residents of the U.S. The lists of countries change periodically so it is advisable to check the Department of State Website to obtain the latest information. (<http://www.state.gov>)

All non-citizens who work in USDA facilities must be reported and tracked, including students, regardless of their visa sponsorship, their employer, or how/if they are paid, and whether or not they are employees of USDA. **Completion of the ARS-230, Non-Citizen Data Sheet, for non-citizen workers is also required.**

USDA interns must be a United States citizen or U.S. Permanent Resident Alien (PRA) or Legal Residents to qualify for the internship program.

If you are a naturalized citizen, you will be asked to provide proof of citizenship.

If you have questions regarding your citizenship, please refer to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website: <http://www.us-immigration.com>

If you are a permanent resident alien (PRA) or legal resident, you will be asked to provide proof of your status. If you have questions regarding proof of permanent resident alien or legal resident status, please refer to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website: <http://www.us-immigration.com>

Am I required to maintain a certain Grade Point Average as an intern?

Yes, students must be in good academic standing with an overall grade point average of 2.7 or better.

Are interns appointed to a particular grade?

Appointments may be made at any grade for which the student qualifies.

What is the pay for interns?

Students in intern programs are paid the same rates as employees in like positions. General Schedule employees are eligible for locality pay and, if applicable, special pay rates.

Are interns eligible for promotion?

Interns are eligible for promotion provided they meet the qualification requirements. Since student appointments are in the excepted service, time in grade restrictions do not apply.

Are there special requirements for interns whose relatives are federal employees?

Relatives of federal employees may participate in the internship program. The only requirement is that there is no direct reporting relationship between the relative and the student and that the relative does not advocate the employment, promotion, or advancement of the student.

Are interns able to work flexible work schedules?

Students may work full-time and part-time work schedules during alternating periods of work and school or on a seasonal basis.

Are breaks in the intern or school program acceptable?

Supervisors may or may not approve a break in the program. A break in the program occurs when an intern is working but is unable to attend school. Furthermore, a break in the program exists when the intern is neither attending classes nor working at the agency. The intern will be charged annual leave or leave without pay during breaks from work. A student may skip a semester without jeopardizing the appointment. Approval or denial of the break is left to the supervisor's discretion.

Are interns eligible for training and professional development?

Interns are eligible for training, at management's discretion. For any tuition expenses incurred that the agency has agreed to pay, the intern's supervisor must complete an SF-182. A Service Agreement must accompany the SF-182.

How does Veterans Preference apply to USDA internships?

Veterans' preference rules and regulations apply (reference 5CFR211, or visit the OPM Vet Guide Website at (<http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>)).

Does USDA prohibit discrimination?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.